

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-12

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USINT DAMASCUS

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CGEN, SY, US

SUBJECT: STOLEN MOSAIC

1. SOME TIME AGO SYRIAN DEPARTMENT OF ANTIQUITIES INFORMED NEWARK MUSEUM THAT LARGE ROMAN MOSAIC, PURCHASED BY MUSEUM, HAD BEEN STOLEN FROM SYRIA. NEWARK MUSEUM DIRECTOR SAMUEL MILLER CORRESPONDED WITH DR. AFFIF BAHNASSI, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF ANTIQUITIES IN SYRIA, STATING WILLINGNESS OF MUSEUM TO RETURN MOSAIC. NO ONE, HOWEVER, WAS WILLING TO UNDERTAKE TRANSPORTATION AND ARRANGEMENTS. DURING RECENT WEEKS DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN ABLE TO BRING ABOUT SOLUTION THIS PROBLEM THROUGH INTERVENTION WITH BOTH NEWARK MUSEUM AND PAN AM.

2. NEWARK MUSEUM HAS CONSENTED TO CRATE, INSURE, AND DELIVER MOSAIC TO PAN AM IN NEW YORK. PAN AM HAS AGREED TO TRANSPORT MOSAIC FREE OF CHARGE TO DAMASCUS. MOSAIC SCHEDULED FOR SHIPMENT ON PAN AM FLIGHT 105 TO DEPART NEW YORK

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ULED FOR SHIPMENT ON PAN AM FLIGHT 105 TO DEPART NEW YORK

ON APRIL 6 AT 1845 EDT AND ARRIVE DAMASCUS ON APRIL 7 AT 1500 LOCAL TIME. CRATED MOSAIC IS BEING CONSIGNED TO USINT CHIEF SCOTES.

3. MUSEUM HAS INSURED MOSAIC FOR \$6,000 BUT LIABILITY ENDS AS SOON AS SCOTES SIGNS FOR IT IN DAMASCUS. CONSEQUENTLY DEPT SUGGESTS SCOTES REQUEST BAHNASSI TO BE PRESENT WHEN MOSAIC ARRIVES AND TO INSPECT MOSAIC FOR DAMAGE BEFORE SIGNING FOR IT. USINT SHOULD DELIVER MILLER LETTER OF MARCH 6 TO BAHNASSI WHICH WAS POUCHED BY DEPT MARCH 18. MILLER HOPES BAHNASSI WILL REPLY ASAP SINCE MUSEUM TRUSTEES ARE ESPECIALLY INTERESTED IN LEARNING WHERE MOSAIC WILL BE HOUSED AFTER ITS RETURN.

4. CRATED MOSAIC WEIGHS 522 POUNDS. DIMENSIONS ARE 54 IN. X 49 IN. X 14 IN. MOSAIC ITSELF WEIGHS 320 POUNDS.

5. ASSUME YOU WILL WANT TO INFORM FONMIN OF ARRANGEMENTS WE HAVE MADE TO ASSURE RETURN OF STOLEN MOSAIC TO SYRIA AND GET APPROPRIATE PUBLICITY. WE WOULD LIKE TO MAKE SURE THAT PANAM ALSO GETS DUE CREDIT WITH SARG FOR ITS ROLE IN TRANSPORTING MOSAIC FREE OF CHARGE. LEAVE TO YOUR DISCRETION HOW BEST DO THIS; ONE WAY MIGHT BE TO ASSOCIATE LOCAL PAN AM REP WITH PRESENTATION CEREMONY. KISSINGER

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